

APPROVED: Meeting No. 33-83

ATTEST: *Helen M. Henehan*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND  
MEETING NO. 27-83

August 1, 1983

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in work session in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, Maryland at Vinson Street, Rockville, Maryland on Monday, August 1, 1983, at 8:15 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor John R. Freeland

Councilman Steve Abrams

Councilman Douglas Duncan

Councilwoman Viola Hovsepian

ABSENT

Councilman John Tyner, II  
(on travel leave)

The Mayor in the Chair.

In attendance: City Manager Larry Blick; City Attorney Paul Glasgow; Secretary Patricia Rager; Mr. Lowell Baier; Mr. Robert Turner; Mr. Lewis Dale; Tony Bullard; Mary Lynn Scott.

Re: Report on the  
Town Center  
Parking Committee

Mr. Baier said the report is the result of a number of meetings and a considerable amount of research and hard work by the Committee members.

The report contains nine findings and each will be addressed separately.

They are:

1. Predicted Growth Estimated (Development Forecasts for Town Center Area
2. Metro Impact
3. Parking Utilization
4. Parking Standards
5. Planned Parking Shortfalls
6. Ride-On
7. Developer Incentives
8. Parking Districts
9. Parking and Traffic Infrastructures

ISSUE NO. 1 - Development Forecasts for Town Center Area

The Town Center Area currently contains 4,220,000 square feet of government, office and retail development. The Planning Department has forecasted that the area will grow by some 2,500,000 square feet, an increase of 60% by the year 2000. The Town Center Parking Committee concludes that development in the Town Center core area will increase 1,700,000 square feet (40%) by 1990 and 2,500,00 square feet by the year 2000. Mr. Baier explained that the reports vary only slightly and the Committee is in agreement that the projection will occur, whether it be early or late. The Traffic and Transportation Commission, the Economic Development Council, and the Planning Staff all agree with the Parking Committee comments. The Planning Commission suggests that development be continuously monitored in order to make appropriate adjustments in the forecast. The Minority Report feels that the forecast is too low.

Mayor Freeland questioned why the figure is not higher as suggested in the Minority Report. Mr. Baier explained why. Mr. Vitol, present in the audience, expressed the neighbors' thoughts, projections and concerns of overdevelopment in the Central Business District area and the overflow of traffic. Mayor Freeland said he presumes that the road constraints were reviewed when the study was done and asked if it were possible to overdevelop even with the constraints in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Baier said it was not possible. Mayor Freeland expressed his concern about parking spillover into the community and stressed that the developer will have to abide by the zoning ordinance. Dr. Cain, present in the audience, said he is still worried. There has been development that has not conformed to the ordinance. Mayor Freeland explained that they were judgment calls and they will be used for future reference. Mr. Paules said he felt the traffic control will be a bigger problem than parking and suggests that more concentration be given to this. Dr. Carlos Caban said there are so many committee reports and methodologies used that he is concerned and confused about what to believe from the information presented.

ISSUE NO. 2 - Metro Impact on Town Center and Adjacent Neighborhoods

According to the most recent forecasts available to the committee, the Rockville Metro Station is scheduled to open in Spring, 1985. As presently designed, the Metro facility will contain a 450 square foot parking lot on the east side of the tracks. According to projected parking demands, the Rockville station will require 1,142 parking spaces to meet its projected use. A shortfall of 692 spaces will therefore exist.

The Parking Committee recommends that the shortfall of 692 spaces should be met by a 500 space parking deck, and a residential permit parking program in the Croyden Park area. The Committee feels that these actions should be addressed immediately. The Planning Staff agrees with the Parking Committee's recommendation. The Planning Commission agrees that the parking deck is needed now on the basis of data developed by Metro in 1973. The Economic Development Council endorses the idea of building a 500-space deck but feels there is no way to accurately assess Metro's parking shortfall. The Traffic and Transportation Commission feels the shortfall estimates should be revised and neighborhood traffic impact be evaluated before proceeding any further and also that parking spillover should not be a problem with an adequate parking permit program. The Minority Committee commented that the deck construction is not adequate to meet the expected shortfall, that there will be commuter spillover into the neighborhoods to avoid paying for parking and that additional data is needed on Metro parking projects.

Mr. Baier said the committee concluded that there will be a serious problem in Croyden Park with parking on the streets and strongly suggests that a parking permit area be established. He also suggested that action be taken now to force Metro to cover the existing lot with a parking deck. Mr. Davis commented that the parking for the Shady Grove and Twinbrook Stations will total well over 5000, making commuters travel there for easier parking. Councilman Abrams asked if any

consideration has been given to satellite parking. Mr. Baier said the committee had but not in depth.

Councilwoman Hovsepian commented that there will be quite an influx of commuters from east Rockville and out of the City and suggested possibly providing parking out of the City and shuttling people to Metro. She asked if there was any place in the City where this could be done. Mayor Freeland stressed the need to protect the neighborhoods with a permit parking program and work with the County and Metro on parking lots to handle the shortfall. He also mentioned having Ride-On available to help with the traffic flow and look into satellite parking - both in and out of City limits. Councilman Abrams questioned the use of HOV restrictions. Mary Lynn Scott, Chairman of the Traffic and Transportation Commission commented that if a deck is built, the need for a permit parking program will still exist and feels the harder problem will be dealing with the traffic problem in that neighborhood. Mr. Blick agreed that there will have to be a permit parking program. Mayor Freeland asked that this program get started and be well underway before Metro opens. Mrs. Scott added that the permit parking program should go further into the neighborhood than just at the intersection. Also, the Traffic and Transportation Commission has looked at the possibility of satellite parking but has found no area within the City limits suitable and therefore did not follow up on it. Mayor Freeland said he realizes that many commuters will not be City residents and again reiterated his request that the City work with the County on satellite parking and shuttle service to reduce crowded streets and parking. He also added that traffic should be discouraged from coming thru the intersection to somehow control the flow of vehicles. Mr. Paules said the problem for competition for free spaces will get worse and suggested that the City ask Metro for a better feel of its numbers because the ones being used now are out of date. Mayor Freeland said it could be a long time before the deck is built, if it ever is built, and questioned if the City really wants it built. Dr. Cain said that

the discussion is totally on Croyden Park and added that people will walk when parking is free. Mayor Freeland asked Mr. Bullard, President of the West End Citizens Association, to look into the issue of a permit parking program in his area. Mr. Baier said he felt the West End is too far from Metro to have commuters park and walk. He explained that the West End is 2500 feet from Metro and the maximum people walk for free parking is 800 feet. Councilwoman Hovsepian expressed her concern on the "leap frogging" effect, whereby people using Metro park where shoppers park and the shoppers are left to park in the neighborhoods. Mr. Baier said that in the committee's report it is suggested that the parking problems be watched closely to see if a problem occurs. After further discussion, Mayor Freeland said it does not seem as though the deck is the answer even if Metro agrees to build it. Other plans are needed such as satellite parking, HOV, encouragement of car pooling, or looking at ways to reduce the impact of traffic.

ISSUE NO. 3 - Utilization of parking and its impact on nearby areas.

At the present time, an average of 57% of existing parking is utilized during peak periods within the Town Center Core Area. This level of use will cause no adverse spillover other than some interplay between long-term and short-term parking.

The Parking Committee concludes that there would be no problem as long as parking standards and reductions are consistently imposed. There may be some spillover due to conflicts between long- and short-term parking. It is suggested that the adjacent neighborhoods be monitored to detect any impact. The Planning Staff agrees with the Parking Committee's comments. The Minority Report made no comment. The Traffic and Transportation Commission agrees with the utilization rate but feels it should not be used for projections or capacity work. A properly managed parking permit program should deal with any spillover. The Economic Development Council feels that the utilization rate is too low and that the figures should be updated.

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The Planning Commission feels that the utilization rate will approach 100% in the future in Town Center and the 57% rate should not be used for planning purposes. They did agree to the monitoring program.

Mr. Baier explained that the Committee looked at two issues: 1) if 3.3 spaces per 1000 square feet is adequate and 2) if there is additional capacity available to handle Metro shortfall. The Council discussed the utilization rate at length. Mr. Dale told of the Planning Commission's problem with this and that they are still monitoring it. Mayor Freeland feels the Planning Commission's comment is valid for this item, it is an interesting factor and should be given appropriate consideration. Mr. Duncan stressed the need for monitoring.

ISSUE NO. 4 - Adequacy of Parking Standards.

Existing parking standards for the Town Center zones equate to 3.3 spaces per G.S.F. (gross square feet) for office, 7.5 spaces per 1000 gross leasable square (G.L.S.F.) feet for retail up to 10,000 square feet and 5 spaces per 1000 G.L.S.F. for retail above 10,000 G.L.S.F. In addition, the Planning Commission may grant reductions of up to 30% based upon (a) non-overlapping peak needs, (b) a 1500 foot or less distance from Metro, or (c) an acceptable parking management plan. The Mayor and Council may grant a 10% reduction in addition to any reduction(s) granted by the Planning Commission.

The Parking Committee concludes that the 3.3 spaces per 1000 square feet is basically adequate but should be computed in gross leasable square feet which is more indicative of real utilization. They suggested that the Planning Commission be able to grant reductions based upon the actual need of the building. The Economic Development Council agreed with the Parking Committee's recommendation. The Minority Report, the Planning staff and the Planning Commission did not agree with the recommendation and suggested that the current standards be adhered to. The Traffic and

Transportation Commission also felt that the parking standard should be retained with the exception that the compact car requirements be revised or abolished.

The Council discussed with Mr. Baier the advantages and disadvantages involved with reducing the parking standards. Councilman Duncan expressed his concern about running into another problem like at Wintergreen. He feels the ratio is good now and should not be changed. Councilwoman Hovsepien questioned the Traffic and Transportation Commission's comment on the compact car issue. The group discussed this at length. Mayor Freeland said that before a position is taken, there needs to be more information. He will entertain the Planning Commission's recommendation until a new tool is found that will help both parties. Mr. Turner said the G.L.S. is a more accurate indicator. Mr. Davis said the staff did not agree with this, it is hard to handle and 3.0 is a good number. Mayor Freeland said more work needs to be done.

(At this time, the Mayor and Council took a five minute recess)

ISSUE NO. 5 - Desirability of Planned Parking Shortfall.

The Town Center Plan contained an objective intended to reduce the number of vehicles converging on the area by encouraging use of alternate means of transportation. One means suggested to accomplish this objective is the creation of planning parking shortfalls which would discourage the use of single occupant automobiles. The possible benefits of a planned parking shortfall would be to lessen development costs and to possibly reduce traffic flow.

The Parking Committee recognizes the intent to stimulate the use of public transportation but recommends that no intentional shortfalls be considered. The Planning staff, the Traffic and Transportation Commission and the Economic Development Council all agree with the Parking Committee's recommendation. The Planning Commission feels it is not justified now but can be helpful in the future as a planning tool. The Minority Report made no comment.

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Councilman Abrams asked if the Metro parking was taken into account. Mr. Baier said it was. Councilman Abrams suggested that there should be a shortfall at the Metro station to perhaps get more help. Councilman Duncan agrees with the Parking Committee's report and added that he does not want to plan a parking shortfall or have one.

ISSUE NO. 6 - Effectiveness of Ride-On Bus System as an Alternate Transportation  
Resource

The County owned and operated Ride-On Bus System presents a potential resource to alleviate traffic and its resultant requirement for additional parking in the Central Business District.

The Parking Committee feels that the Ride-On is a desirable service but it is not a substantive solution to traffic issues. The Planning Commission also feels that the Ride-On is not much of a solution now but it has potential in the future. The Economic Development Council questioned the effect that high parking costs would have on public transportation use. The Traffic and Transportation Commission feels Ride-On can be a substantive solution to traffic issues. If it is not used and encouraged, development capacity will suffer. The Planning staff agrees in terms of the parking requirement and the Minority Report made no comment.

Mr. Baier explained to the Council that this area is automobile oriented and people do not change their habits. He questioned whether Ride-On is a workable and viable traffic solution to parking. Councilman Abrams said that cost is a big determining factor and not to write off people changing their driving habits. Councilwoman Hovsepian said she hopes it to be as Councilman Abrams suggests.

ISSUE NO. 7 - Developer Incentives.

The City of Rockville has a major commitment toward guiding and stimulating development of the remaining land in the Town Center. Since the development standards for this area are imposed by the City, the issue arises as to whether or not development incentives are necessary to promote growth in the Town Center and



should the City provide financial or other types of incentives available to a local government to stimulate development in the Town Center.

The Parking Committee reports that developer incentives have been used in the past and their continued use should be evaluated on a case by case basis. The Economic Development Council, the Planning Commission and the Planning staff all agree with the recommendation of the Parking Committee. The Traffic and Transportation Commission feels that parking incentives can be useful, but discussion of other incentive forms should not have been included in the report. The Minority Report also feels that this should not have been included.

Mr. Baier said the Committee feels that political involvement of the City will be necessary to bring about the forecasts discussed earlier. Mayor Freeland said he would like to hear from Dr. Cain why he feels this should not have been included in the report. Dr. Cain explained that he does not believe the committee came to a consensus on this issue. Councilwoman Hovsepien said she does not see where it fits into the Parking Committee report and agrees with Dr. Cain. The incentives would have to deal with parking. Mr. Turner said it was his understanding that the incentives were to provide for parking tradeoffs and not building. The Council discussed this point further. Mayor Freeland felt that it is an element of judgment by the Mayor and Council. Dr. Cain said there is nothing wrong with the idea but he is not comfortable with the way this issue showed up in the report. Dr. Caban said he does not understand the use of leverage when the City really does not have such a tool. Mr. Baier explained that the City can use leverage by reducing taxes over a certain time period or by the use of industrial revenue bonds. Dr. Caban asked if they were available to the developers. Mr. Baier said they are but not too many know about them. Mayor Freeland said since the majority of the review committees have agreed with the Parking Committee report and Dr. Cain is in agreement with the idea

but not its inception, therefore, the issue should be strictly related to parking related items.

ISSUE NO. 8 - Necessity of Parking Districts

Throughout the preparation of the Town Center Plan, the discussion on the Winmar/Nordal contract, and in the discussions regarding a parking management strategy, the subject of creating a public parking district in the Town Center area has repeatedly come up.

The Parking Committee recommends that the public parking districts should not be established at this time but future creation should not be precluded should circumstances warrant. All the other review groups except the Minority Report, agreed with the recommendation by the Committee. The Minority Report suggests that it not even be included in the Report.

Mr. Baier reiterated the Parking Committee's recommendation. Dr. Cain said he remembers a different context being raised at the committee meeting than the one raised tonight and therefore agrees with the recommendation of the Parking Committee. Councilwoman Hovsepian said she would not like to see the City involved in any more parking plans. Councilman Abrams also agreed with Councilwoman Hovsepian. Mayor Freeland said he, too, is opposed to any type of parking district. He explained how he fought against a parking district in the Mall and explained how the County has had trouble with their systems. He suggests that the issue be kept in the report but sees no need for the City to subsidize parking.

ISSUE NO. 9 - Required Infrastructure to Support Forecasted Traffic/Parking needs

In order to support the amount and nature of development forecasted it is essential that the street system be adequate to accommodate the resulting traffic.

The Parking Committee suggests that new information is required which will deal with accessibility to parking facilities. The EDC and the Planning staff has prepared draft information which is to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The

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Traffic and Transportation Commission commented that the current assessment of future Town Center traffic capacity is complete and adequate. Standards need to be developed for location of driveway access points. The Minority Report feels that this should not be included in the report.

Mr. Baier said this issue should be looked at by all City parties due to the seriousness of the matter. Mr. Baier said his individual recommendation is that the capacity analysis be evaluated. Councilman Duncan said he is waiting for that information and he is anxious to see it. Councilman Abrams asked about COG's report. Mr. Davis said it should be available in 3 to 4 months. Dr. Cain said he would like to withdraw the Minority Report's comment after hearing Mr. Baier's comments.

Dr. Cain requested that the entire membership of the Committee be included in the final document. Mayor Freeland asked that this request be granted. Councilman Duncan said he feels this should be something that the committee decides since the committee submitted the report to the Council. He did not feel it was up to the Council to dictate to the Committee. Mayor Freeland asked if the Council needs to adopt or take any action. Mr. Blick suggested that this be put on a future Mayor and Council agenda for formal adoption by a resolution.

Mr. Dale said it was his feeling that the Mayor and Council did not want to pursue the recommendation to compel WMATA to construct a 500 space parking deck above the existing lot. Mayor Freeland said that will be decided when brought back before the Council but it is his feeling that going after the deck is a waste of time.

Mayor Freeland thanked Mr. Baier and all the other committee members present this evening for their time and help.

Re: Executive Session

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council in work session, the meeting was closed at 10:45 p.m. for executive session to discuss personnel.

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Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council in executive session, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m. to convene again in general session in the Council Chamber on Monday, August 22, 1983, at 8:00 p.m. or at the call of the Mayor.